

## POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES FOR TRANSLATING PERSONAL NAMES IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

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**Abstract:** Personal names are considered “specific words” and thus most often kept untranslated. However, as translation theory has developed, making it not only changing language features but also mediating cultural aspects, personal names are reconsidered in translation. Since they are culturally bound, this study aims to find out, when personal names are translated, what translation strategies apply and why. The data were collected from the weekly comic *Donal Bebek* (2018) as well as from the *Hunger Games* trilogy novels written by Suzanne Collins (2008, 2009, 2010) and translated by Hetih Rusli (2009, 2010, 2012). The findings show that translating personal names in children literature can be more complicated than translating those in literature for older readers. This study has found out that four strategies (preservation, naturalization, couplet, and adaptation) are used to approach the personal names translation for the children literature; and only two strategies (preservation and literal translation) are applied to the translation of those in young adult literature. Reasons for using such strategies are as follows: several aspects (such as connotation, pronunciation, and style) have been considered when translating personal names in children literature, while they are more flexible when translating personal names in young adult literature.

**Keywords:** translating personal names, translation techniques, children literature, young adult literature

menerjemahkan berarti tidak hanya mengubah fitur bahasa tetapi juga memediasi aspek budaya, nama diri dipertimbangkan ulang dalam penerjemahan. Karena nama-nama diri terikat secara budaya, penelitian ini bertujuan mengetahui kapan nama diri diterjemahkan, strategi apa yang digunakan, dan apa alasannya. Sumber data dikumpulkan dari komik mingguan *Donal Bebek* (2018) serta dari novel trilogi *Hunger Games* yang ditulis oleh Suzanne Collins (2008, 2009, 2010) dan diterjemahkan oleh Hetih Rusli (2009, 2010, 2012). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa menerjemahkan nama-nama diri dalam sastra anak-anak bisa

lebih rumit daripada menerjemahkannya nama-nama diri dalam sastra untuk pembaca remaja. Penelitian ini telah mencatat bahwa empat strategi (pelestarian, naturalisasi, kuplet dan adaptasi) digunakan untuk menerjemahkan nama diri untuk sastra anak-anak; dan hanya dua strategi (pelestarian dan terjemahan literal) diterapkan untuk penerjemahan nama diri dalam sastra remaja. Ada sejumlah alasan untuk menggunakan strategi-strategi tersebut: aspek-aspek linguistik seperti konotasi, pengucapan, dan gaya bahasa perlu dipertimbangkan saat menerjemahkan nama-nama diri dalam sastra anak-anak, sedangkan proses menerjemahkan nama-nama diri dalam sastra remaja cenderung lebih lentur.

**Key words:** penerjemahan nama diri, teknik-teknik penerjemahan, sastra anak-anak, sastra remaja

## INTRODUCTION

Most people who have limited translation experience might consider that personal names should not be translated. However, the literature and translation practices have shown that names can be either preserved or translated. Zarei and Norouzi (2014) write that before the seventies, proper nouns were considered a grammatical category that should be translated, but since then there is a tendency to leave them untranslated. This was a shifting paradigm in translation theory. Al-Hassan and Jordan (2013) explain that in the initial phase of translation theory, translation was known as replacing a text in one language to another in the target language with the main emphasis on linguistic aspects, but in the later phase, translation studies have expanded to include cultural aspects; so more recently a translator is not only a language mediator but also a cultural mediator (Al-Hassan and Jordan, 2013). While it may be true that proper nouns need no translation, there are some exceptions regarding the translation of personal names.

Along this line of reasoning, when personal names are translated within the process of rendering the source language text into the target language text, this study aims to find out, first, what translation strategies apply, and secondly, why such strategies are selected.

## PERSONAL NAMES TRANSLATION

Newmark (1988: 214) writes that names (first names and surnames) are usually transferred directly, especially when the nationality is important and the names have no relevant connotations. He adds that there is an exception for the names of famous saints, monarchs, popes, and prominent classical figures (Newmark, 1988: 214). That is why in Indonesian, Alexander the Great is translated as Iskandar Agung, Pope Francis is translated as Paus Fransiskus, and Avicenna is translated as Ibnu Sina. I believe this exception is quite reasonable, because such figures have had influential roles due respectively to his ancient political leadership, his world-wide religious dominance, and his strong influence in philosophical and scientific ideas; therefore their names should be adjusted so that people from different language backgrounds find them easier to engage with.

Besides the aforementioned personal names, Newmark (1988: 215) explains further that names which have relevant connotations in imaginative literature are also translated, for example, Harriet, the name of a chicken in P.G. Wodehouse's *Love among the Chickens*, is rendered as Laura in Swedish to maintain the incongruous connotation of the name. In line with this idea, Aguilera (2008) believes that proper nouns can also be

translated and substituted, particularly when dealing with children literature. Children are classified into three levels (pre-reading, age 0 – 6 years old; reading and writing, age 6 to adolescents; and adolescents and older); the lower their age, the lower the capability of understanding and accepting foreign words (Aguilera, 2008). This means that the translation of children's literature targeting the lower level should be more sensitive. This is relevant to the translation of personal names in fairy tales and cartoons. For instance, Cinderella is translated as Cenerentola in Italian, Cendrillon in German, and Ashenputtelin in German; and Snow White is translated as Schneewittchen in German and Putri Salju in Indonesian.

Translators do not use the same strategy for translating names in all texts (Pour, 2009). However, several studies have reported common strategies on how translators approach personal names. Jaleniauskiene and Čičelytė (2009) report that the most frequently used strategies in translating personal names in children literature are preservation, transformation, and creation, as well as localization. While, Abdolmaleki (2012) suggests four possible ways of translating proper nouns in general texts: (1) keep them unchanged from the original version; Newmark (1988: 81) labels this strategy as transference; (2) modify them at the level of spelling and phonology; Newmark (1988: 81) calls this strategy naturalization; (3) expand them in order to provide meaningful information in the target culture; and (4) eliminate them if the names cause confusion for the readers in the target culture.

There are no prescribed rules on how personal names should be translated, but the above-mentioned studies indicate that readers in the target language are among key factors influencing the translators' decisions. To see the difference how translators approach personal names in texts with different target readers, the next sections of this paper discuss the translation of personal names in children and young adult literature from English into Indonesian.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The personal names are collected from two main sources; *Donal Bebek* comics and *Hunger Games* trilogy novels. The first data source is from weekly comic *Donal Bebek* (1906<sup>th</sup> and 1907<sup>th</sup> editions, 2018) published by PT Penerbitan Sarana Bobo under the licence from The Walt Disney Co. This comic tells stories about *Donald Duck* and other cartoon characters from world famous Walt Disney. This comic, a pioneer of picture stories in Indonesia, is mostly suitable for children in pre-reading level and young adolescents. The researchers first list the names, then find out the English names using clues from open source ([www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)) and then match the clues with names itemized in Walt Disney character directory ([www.characters.disney.com](http://www.characters.disney.com)) and animation source website ([www.animationsource.org](http://www.animationsource.org)). The researchers then identify the translation techniques and make interpretations about the translator decisions for selecting the technique.

Next, the second data source is from *Hunger Games* novels written by Suzanne Collins (2008, 2009, 2010) originally in English and the Indonesian version translated by Hetih Rusli (2009, 2010, 2012). These novels include *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009), *Mockingjay* (2010) published by Scholastic Press and the translated version published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama. These trilogy novels, best for young adults, tell about unspecified future of North America that changes into a country named Panem,

consisting of a wealthy Capitol and 12 poor districts. Every year a young couple from each district should join a televised pageant involving death match supported by advanced technology called *Hunger Games*. The winning couple and their home district will be compensated for with food and other supplies. The researchers list names from the English versions and find out those translated names in the Indonesian versions.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section consists of two sub-sections: translation of personal names in *Donal Bebek* comics and translation of personal names in the trilogy novels *Hunger Games*.

### Personal Names Translation in *Donal Bebek* Comics

Twelve names appeared in the two editions of *Donal Bebek* as shown in Table 1.

**Table1.** Personal Names in *Donal Bebek* Comics

No	Indonesian Names	English Names
1.	<i>Lady</i>	Lady
2.	<i>Silky</i>	Silky
3.	<i>Gufi</i>	Goofy
4.	<i>Donal Bebek</i>	Donald Duck
5.	<i>DesiBebek</i>	Daisy Duck
6.	<i>Miki Tikus</i>	Mickey Mouse
7.	<i>AgusAngsa</i>	Gus Goose
8.	<i>Midas Serigala</i>	Big Bad Wolf
9.	<i>Lang Ling Lung</i>	Gyro Gearloose
10.	<i>PamanGober</i>	Scrooge McDuck
11.	<i>Kwik, Kwek, Kwak</i>	Huey, Duey, Louie
12.	<i>Berandal</i>	Scamp

There are four translation techniques used for these twelve character names: (a) Pure Transference / Preservation: Lady and Silky, names of dogs, are preserved. There are two reasons why these names are purely transferred. First, Indonesian children possibly will not have difficulties in pronouncing the names. Second, as synthesized by Jaleniauskienė and Čičelytė (2009), names that include descriptive elements are not translated. The word ‘lady’ characterizes a woman of higher social status; in this case, ‘Lady’ is a name of a female cocker spaniel that lives in an upper-class family. Then, the word ‘silky’ is an adjective to resemble silk which is soft or smooth. Thus ‘Silky’ in the story refers to a dog whose character is soft and polite. (b) Naturalisation: Goofy is naturalized into Gufi. The phonetic transcription of Goofy is /gu:fi/ and thus it will be easier for Indonesian children if the spelling of the name is closer to how it is pronounced. (c) Couplet: Couplet is combining two techniques in translating a single word or phrase (Newmark, 1988: 91). (i) Naturalization + Literal Translation: There are three names (Donal Bebek, DesiBebek, and Miki Tikus) which are translated using the combination of naturalization and literal

translation. The second names ‘Duck’ and ‘Mouse,’ indicating species, are translated literally as *Bebek* and *Tikus*. But first names Donald, Daisy, and Mickey are translated closer to their phonetic transcription; Donald /dɒnəld/ becomes *Donal*, Daisy /dæsi/ becomes *Desi*, and Mickey /miki/ becomes *Miki*. (ii) Substitution (Localization) + Literal Translation: The other couplet technique is the combination of substitution and literal translation as it is found in *Gus Goose* which is creatively translated as *AgusAngsa*. The second name *Goose* is literally translated as *Angsa*. While the first name *Gus* is substituted with *Agus* which is a typically Indonesian name. The substitution reason is that *Gus* has a specific connotation in Indonesian context; *Gus* refers to a son of a Muslim scholar, for example, *Gus Dur* (fourth Indonesian president) is the son of Muslim scholar K. H. Wahid Hasyim. Therefore, to make it unbiased, the translator chooses *Agus* to substitute *Gus* which sounds similar. Also, *AgusAngsa* has more stylistic assonance; it could still maintain the original stylistic alliteration of *Gus Goose*. (d) Substitution and Adaptation: The translator has used the substitution and adaptation technique for these following names based on several reasons as shown in table 2.

**Table 2.** Substitution and Adaptation Technique and its Reasons

No	American names (A) and Indonesian names (I)	Explanation
1.	Big Bad Wolf (A) Midas Serigala (I)	The last name <i>Wolf</i> is literally translated as <i>Serigala</i> . The substitution <i>Midas</i> is taken from the middle name of his alias name, Zeke <u>Midas</u> <i>Wolf</i> .
2.	Gyro Gearloose(A) Lang Ling Lung (I)	<i>Gyro Gearloose</i> is a famous inventor in the Donald Duck universe, but his ideas are often outrageous. He is such a ‘ <i>linglung</i> ’ person. <i>Linglung</i> in Indonesian describes an absent-minded person because s/he is confused or too serious in thinking of an object. Then, to make the Indonesian name more stylistic, the translator creatively modified the name into <i>Lang Ling Lung</i> .
3.	Scrooge McDuck(A) PamanGober (I)	<i>Scrooge McDuck</i> is also popular as Uncle <i>Scrooge</i> . Thus the translator uses ‘ <i>Paman</i> ’ as a literal translation of ‘uncle.’ While <i>Gober</i> is simplified from the Dutch name of <i>Scrooge McDuck</i> , <i>Dagobert Duck</i> . The translator chooses to adapt from Dutch name because the English name <i>Scrooge</i> /skru:dʒ/ is more difficult for children to pronounce. Denham and Lobeck (2013: 124) write that the structure of children’s

No	American names (A) and Indonesian names (I)	Explanation
		syllables is Consonant – Vocal (CV). Notice that Gober consists of two syllables: ‘Go-’ CV and ‘-ber’ CVC, which sounds more common and natural in Indonesian than a single syllable Scrooge: CCCVVCC.
4.	Huey, Duey, Louie(A) Kwik, Kwek, Kwak (I)	The American names of these triplet little ducks (/hui/, /dui/ and /lui/) possibly sound strange and uncommon as Indonesian names. Therefore they are modified following the sound of duck ‘quack-quack’, whose onomatopoeic Indonesian equivalent is ‘ <i>kwek-kwek</i> ’. For the stylistic reason, the triplet names then become Kwik, Kwek, and Kwak.
5.	Scamp(A) Berandal (I)	The personalities of Scamp in the stories are stubborn and disobedient. A person with this personality is frequently called <i>berandal</i> in the Indonesian context. The translated name ‘Berandal’ is taken from the personalities of the character.

### Personal Names Translation in Young Adult Literature

Most personal names in *Hunger Games* are preserved in the translation, except a few, which are given literal translation. Alphabetically, these names are listed in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Personal Names in *Hunger Games* and their Indonesian Translations

No	English	Indonesian	No	English	Indonesian
1.	Annie Cresta	Annie Cresta	45.	Leeg 1	Leeg 1
2.	Atala	Atala	46.	Leeg 2	Leeg 2
3.	Beetee (Volts)	Beetee (Volts)	47.	Leevy	Leevy
4.	Blight	Blight	48.	Lyme	Lyme
5.	Boggs	Boggs	49.	Madge Undersee	Madge Undersee
6.	Bonnie	Bonnie	50.	Mags	Mags
7.	Bristel	Bristel	51.	Martin	Martin
8.	Brutus	Brutus	52.	Marvel	Marvel
9.	Buttercup	Buttercup	53.	Mayor Undersee	Wali Kota Undersee
10.	Caesar Flickerman	Caesar Flickerman	54.	Maysilee Donner	Maysilee Donner
11.	Cashmere	Cashmere	55.	Messalla	Messalla
12.	Castor	Castor	56.	Mitchell	Mitchell
13.	Cato	Cato	57.	Morphlings	Morphlings
14.	Cecelia	Cecelia	58.	Mr. Everdeen	Mr. Everdeen
15.	Chaff	Chaff	59.	Mr. Mellark	Mr. Mellark
16.	Cinna	Cinna	60.	Octavia	Octavia

17.	Claudius Templesmith	Claudius Templesmith	61.	PeetaMellark	PeetaMellark
18.	Clove	Clove	62.	Plutarch Heavensbee	Plutarch Heavensbee
19.	Cray	Cray	63.	Pollux	Pollux
20.	Cressida	Cressida	64.	Portia	Portia
21.	Dalton	Dalton	65.	Posy Hawthorne	Posy Hawthorne
22.	Darius	Darius	66.	<b>President Coin</b>	<b>Presiden Coin</b>
23.	Delly Cartwright	Delly Cartwright	67.	<b>President Snow</b>	<b>Presiden Snow</b>
24.	Dr. Aurelius	Dr. Aurelius	68.	Primrose Everdeen	Primrose Everdeen
25.	Eddy	Eddy	69.	Purnia	Purnia
26.	Effie Trinket	Effie Trinket	70.	<b>Commander Paylor</b>	<b>KomandanPaylor</b>
27.	Enobaria	Enobaria	71.	Ripper	Ripper
28.	FinnickOdair	FinnickOdair	72.	Romulus Thread	Romulus Thread
29.	Flavius	Flavius	73.	Rooba	Rooba
30.	<b>Foxface</b>	<b>Si MukaRubah</b>	74.	Rory Hawthorne	Rory Hawthorne
31.	FulviaCardew	FulviaCardew	75.	Rue	Rue
32.	Gale Hawthorne	Gale Hawthorne	76.	Seeder	Seeder
33.	Glimmer	Glimmer	77.	Seneca Crane	Seneca Crane
34.	Gloss	Gloss	78.	Tax	Tax
35.	<b>The Goat Man</b>	<b>Pak Kambing</b>	79.	Thom	Thom
36.	Greasy Sae	Greasy Sae	80.	Thresh	Thresh
37.	Haymitch Abernathy	Haymitch Abernathy	81.	Tigris	Tigris
38.	Hazelle Hawthorne	Hazelle Hawthorne	82.	Titus	Titus
39.	Homes	Homes	83.	Twill	Twill
40.	Jackson	Jackson	84.	Venia	Venia
41.	Johanna Mason	Johanna Mason	85.	Vick Hawthorne	Vick Hawthorne
42.	KatnissEverdeen	KatnissEverdeen	86.	Wiress (Nuts)	Wiress (Nuts)
43.	Lady	Lady	87.	Woof	Woof
44.	Lavinia	Lavinia			

As can be seen in Table 3, the preservation technique is mostly chosen by HetihRusli (the translator) because she might consider that young adults are more open-minded than children in respecting foreign names. Aguilera (2008) states that the older the readers, the more capable they are in accepting foreign words, including foreign names. Moreover, the setting of the *Hunger Games* story is in North America, and it has been clearly stated by Newmark (1988: 124) that personal names are not translated when there is an emphasis of nationality.

However, it is interesting to note that the translator does translate several nicknames, especially the descriptive ones. Pour (2009) notes that nickname is shorter than the real name, for example, Sue as the nickname of Susan; besides, a nickname can also be descriptive, for example, The Iron Lady for Margaret Thatcher. Table 4 shows several cases of descriptive nicknames in *Hunger Games* which are given literal translation.

**Table 4.** Literal Translation of Nicknames in Hunger Games

NO	Source Language (English)	Target Language (Indonesian)
1.	I don't know his real name, everyone just calls him <b>the Goat Man</b> .	<i>Akutaktahunamaaslinya, semua orang memanggilnya</i> <b>Pak Kambing</b> .(I.p.298)

	(I.p.266)	
2.	I try to work out who is left. Five Career Tributes. <b>Foxface</b> . Thresh and Rue. (I.p.156)	<i>Akuberusahamengingatingsiapasaja yang tersisa. Lima PesertaKarier. <b>Si MukaRubah</b>. Thresh dan Rue. (I.p.175-6).</i>
3.	<b>President Coin</b>	<b>Presiden Coin</b>
4.	<b>President Snow</b>	<b>Presiden Snow</b>
5.	<b>Commander Paylor</b>	<b>KomandanPaylor</b>
6.	<b>The Head Peacekeeper</b> loved wild turkey. (I.p.52)	<i><b>PemimpinPenjagaPerdamaia</b>nsukakalkun liar. (I.p.62)</i>
7.	“Go on, then, <b>Lover Boy</b> ,” says the boy from District 2. (I.p.160)	<i>“Pergisana, <b>Lover Boy</b>,” kata anaklelakidariDistrik 2. (I.p.180)</i>
8.	“Johanna’s nicknamed them <b>Nuts and Volts</b> ,” he says. “I think she’s <b>Nuts</b> and he’s <b>Volts</b> .” II.p.191.	<i>“Johanna menjulukimereka<b>Nuts dan Volts</b>,” kata Peeta. “Kurasa yang perempuan<b>Nuts</b> danlelakinya<b>Volts</b>” II.p.249</i>

As shown in Table 4, the translator used the literal translation technique for the title (*president/presiden* and *commander/komandan*) as shown in (3), (4), and (5). She also used a similar technique for translating nicknames in (1) *Goat Man/Pak Kambing* and (6) *The Head Peacekeeper/PimpinanPenjagaPerdamaian*, and also used the same technique with the addition of ‘Si’ for the nickname in (2) *Foxface/Si MukaRubah*. ‘Si’ is one of the Indonesian articles that is attached to someone's name and adjective (Simanjuntak, 2014).

Different from those in (1), (2), and (6), the nickname in (7) is unique because *Lover Boy* is kept as it is, using the preservation technique. ‘*Lover Boy*’ belongs to English slang, referring to a lover or an attractive man that makes girls easily fall in love (Heriyati, 2010). Slang is part of language variation, socially popular among youngsters, and sometimes gives prestige to the speakers (Zhou and Fan, 2013; Muhartoyo and Wijaya, 2014). In this respect, the translator keeps using ‘*Lover Boy*’ because she probably assumes that the readers are familiar with the meaning of this expression. It is also possible that she intentionally introduces the slang expression to attract readers who have not known yet about the meaning.

Finally, the nicknames *Nuts and Volts* in number (8), like number (7), are also preserved in the translation: *Nuts dan Volts*. Notice that the preservation here is probably motivated by the ‘suggestive meaning’ of each word. The word *Nuts* (in machinery) applies to the female; and *Volts* (in physics) applies to the male. This semantic play is much like sound symbolism in phonology, where sounds may suggest meaning, such as the word *knock*, which refers to the ‘act of knocking’.

## CONCLUSION

Personal names translation could be problematic because names are culturally and contextually bond. Referring particularly to translating literary works, the adjustment should consider acceptance degree by the target readers in responding to foreign names. When the target readers are children, the translation of personal names should be more



careful, considering several aspects such as pronunciation, connotation, and style. But the translation of texts for young adult readers can be more flexible in terms of preserving the original foreign names and translating descriptive nicknames. Moreover, a translator, as a cultural mediator, can introduce some slang to the readers. Above all, translators should understand how personal names are commonly translated. Small samples discussion in this paper has shown several practices of personal names translation in children and adult literature by experienced translators using techniques of preservation, naturalization, couplet, substitution, adaptation, and literal translation. Further studies should explore translation of personal names, which include names of places and objects, especially in adult literature and in other genres or text types, both from English and any other language into Indonesian.

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